

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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R 111540Z FEB 76

FM AMCONSUL MEDELLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1254

INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

AMCONSUL CALI

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEDELLIN 0027

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, CO

SUBJ: SECURITY FORCES CLAIM SUCCESSES AGAINST URBAN GUERRILLAS,
KIDNAPPERS

1. ACCORDING ANTIOQUIA'S ENERGETIC CHIEF OF DAS (DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SECURITY), SECURITY FORCES IN MEDELLIN IN PROCESS OF WRAPPING UP SIZABLE URBAN GUERRILLA NETWORK OF NATIONAL LIBERATION ARMY (ELN--PRO-CUBAN). DAS HAS APPREHENDED THREE LOCAL ELN LEADERS AND HAS OBTAINED, THROUGH INTERROGATIONS AND DOCUMENTS SEIZED, EXTENSIVE INFORMATION ON MILITANTS, SYMPATHIZERS, AND FINANCE SOURCES OF GUERRILLAS IN THIS REGION. RESULT, ACCORDING DAS, EXPECTED TO BE FURTHER DETENTIONS AND LARGEST COURT MARTIAL YET HELD IN COLOMBIA DURING CURRENT STATE OF SEIGE.

2. FOR FIRST TIME IN SIX MONTHS, NO KIDNAP VICTIMS BEING HELD IN MEDELLIN. LAST INDIVIDUAL HELD (ELDERLY MERCHANT AND CONSERVATIVE PARTY LEADER) WAS RESCUED, FEB. 8, IN ANOTHER DRAMATIC OPERATION CONDUCTED BY ANTI-KIDNAPPING/EXTORTION COMMAND (CAES). ACCORDING DAS CHIEF, CAES ACTIONS HAVE EFFECTIVELY BROKEN BACK OF MEDELLIN KIDNAPPING RINGS. 26 PERSONS HAVE BEEN SENTENCED TO LENGTHY PRISON TERMS AND MORE THAN 40 KILLED WHEN RESISTING ARREST. DAS CHIEF ALSO AFFIRMED THAT RELATED
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INVESTIGATIONS HAVE REVEALED NO TIES BETWEEN KIDNAPPERS AND

DRUG TRAFFICKERS, AND POSSIBLE TIES BETWEEN KIDNAPPERS AND URBAN GUERRILLAS (ELN; AS PLANNERS, NOT EXECUTORS), ONLY IN TWO EARLY KIDNAPPINGS OF WEALTHY JEWISH INDUSTRIALISTS.

3. COMMENT: CONTINUING UNIVERSITY AND LABOR AGITATION, AND RECENT GUERRILLA INCURSIONS NEAR BORDER OF DEPARTMENTS OF ANTIOQUIA AND CORDOBA, REMAIN CAUSE OF CONCERN TO AUTHORITIES. HOWEVER, TENSION HAS EASED AND PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN (AND COOPERATION WITH) AUTHORITIES HAS RISEN, AS RESULT OF: (1) EFFECTIVE ACTIONS BY CAES; (2) SHOW OF FORCE AND DETERMINATION, COUPLED WITH RESTRAINT, OF SECURITY FORCES IN CONFRONTING RECENT DEMONSTRATIONS; (3) WIDESPREAD ADMIRATION AND RESPECT FOR AUTHORITIES THEMSELVES, MOST NOTABLY POLICE AND DAS CHIEFS AND RECENTLY DEPARTED FOURTH BRIGADE COMMANDER. YOULE

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